The Centenary of Edw. Whelan

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D. C. HARVEY

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... of ...

Edward Whelan

BY

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Being an account of how a friendless Irish emigrant boy rose to prominence as a brilliant journalist and orator; and by means of these talents did yeoman service in securing Responsible Government, Free Education, and Free Lands for Prince Edward Island.

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THE CENTENARY
OF
EDWARD WHELAN

BY D. C. HARVEY

If we seek a warrant for this movement to revive the memory of Edward Whelan, we may find it in one of his best-known addresses, that on *Eloquence As An Art*, delivered little more than three years before his early and untimely death.

In that lecture, after reviewing with considerable skill the general principles of eloquence and illustrating them at considerable length from Grattan and Curran, he says: "The Irish people—and it is one of the most beautiful traits in their character—are peculiarly tenacious in cherishing the memory of their great men—no matter whether they were distinguished on the battle field, in the Senate, or in the walks of Literature. The 'dim, religious light' which fame sheds upon the achievements of their poets, orators and warriors, of a bygone age, is far more precious to them than the glare and grandeur of the present hour; and the farther the object of their adoration is removed from them by the lapse of time, the more fervently their affections entwine it, and the more romantic are the visions which bathe it in the attractive hues of beauty and excellence.

Here then is the original warrant for the *Irish Benevolent Society*, and kindred organizations in Prince Edward Island, to take the initiative in cherishing the memory of one of our statesmen and benefactors. The spirit of Whelan modestly hovers over you, benignantly acquiesces, and seems to say: "This is a beautiful trait in your character, to remember me as I have remembered those who have gone before."

In that same address we find a reason why all Prince Edward Islanders, without distinction as to race or religion should join

in the memorial celebration; for there he says further, "The study of the actions of great men is one of the most ennobling of pursuits. Few can hope to be great or noble by intellect or worldly rank, but all may be good, all may be useful members of society, according to their opportunities; and this goodness and usefulness may be stimulated and encouraged by learning how other men triumphed over difficulties—how they won honor and fame, and riches by self-sacrifices, by devotion to the interests of mankind, by a proper use of the great powers with which God had endowed them."

Here then is our second warrant for doing honor to the memory of Whelan, for he was a man who breasted unfavorable circumstances, made great sacrifices, and was instrumental in doing more than any of his contemporaries, in extending the bounds of political power and civil liberty throughout the Island.

But in that address we also find a reason why Canadians in general and students of Canadian history in particular should do honor to his memory. The most persistent and abiding memory of Whelan is that of his eloquence; and a careful study of his lecture on that subject gives us the key to the secret shrines at which he worshipped, shows us the models whom he imitated, and beyond them gives us a peep at the continuity of history and tradition in the slow upward struggle of mankind. Thus the spirit of Grattan and of Curran is resurrected in Prince Edward Island, the mantle of these great Irish orators, carried by an emigrant to our shores, is sported in the Garden of the Gulf, hitherto kept a wilderness by the same mistaken principle of absentee landlordism, that had brought grief to the Irish people, sorrow and tribulation to the British Government; but had been the inspiration of some of the most impassioned oratory that ever adorned the annals of an imaginative people. Thus, in studying the career of Whelan, in this little Island, we are suprised to discover that ideals, held aloft in the Emerald Isle, and ideas, expressed in the discussion of issues long dead, are once again revivified and passed on as the permanent possession of mankind.

It is not likely that we shall ever again have to fight for free land in Canada, but we may have to defend free education and responsible government; and, in preparation for such a contingency, we shall do well to rediscover the old beliefs that actuated our fathers in establishing these principles: for it seems to be the stern law of life that what we fight for we value, that old principles have to be contended for in new forms, lest our moral fibre become flabby, our moral sense deadened and inert. Therefore, because Whelan, as the heir of a great tradition in another land, became the most eloquent and tolerant champion of the freedom of the human spirit in Prince Edward Island, we find the third reason for cherishing his memory.

Thus, with a triple warrant for our meeting, Islanders of Irish descent and Islanders in general join hands with students of Canadian history and of the expansion of British institutions and freedom, in an earnest attempt to rescue from oblivion a name that is worthy of honor.

There was a time in this fair Island's history when the name of Whelan was familiar in every household, whether political friend or political foe; but the national memory is short or, to speak less cynically, a new generation has arisen that knew not Joseph. It was to avert this sad destiny that a warm friend and admirer of Whelan, the late J. C. Underhay, worked long and faithfully to secure a fund for erecting a monument to the departed statesman. Speaking on its behalf, in 1886, he said: "No marble monument is needed to perpetuate the memory of Edward Whelan in this province. Our free schools, free lands, and self-government, with the well-tilled fields and comfortable homes, which all over the province have taken the place of the rude structures and neglected farms of the rent-paying era, are all monuments to his memory, more lasting than freestone or marble. But the people of Prince Edward Island need to erect a monument to his memory to tell to future generations that we, who were the immediate recipients of the benefits his patriotic heart, his gifted intellect, and his eloquent tongue procured for us, are not ungrateful for, or forgetful of, the great benefits he was so largely instrumental in securing for this Province."

Forty years have elapsed since that appeal was made. No monument of either freestone or marble exists to tell the present generation what they owe to this particular statesman: but this representative assemblage of another generation is at least an indication that we wish to keep his memory green, to recall his eventful career, to describe his attractive personality, and to estimate his permanent contribution to the history and well-being of our Island home.

Edward Whelan was born in County Mayo, Ireland, in 1824. When a mere boy he emigrated with his widowed mother to Nova Scotia. On the wharf at Halifax his prepossessing appearance attracted the attention of Joseph Howe who took him into his newspaper office and taught him the art of printing. Howe himself, as a printer's apprentice, had stored his mind with the masterpieces of literature, history, and biography, and was at this time just embarked on his stormy and brilliant career in Nova Scotian politics. He influenced and encouraged the youthful Whelan to educate himself, and the boy's heart warmed to his benefactor, whom he ever afterwards regarded as a model; his imagination took fire, and, as a result, at a time when most boys

are aimless and little concerned with the problems of life, he plunged into the political warfare of his day with a zest and insight quite remarkable. History, poetry and rhetoric were his delight, writing and debating the safety-valves of the national instinct of pugnacity. Hence it transpired that, when the Reformers of Prince Edward Island sought for a journalist to present their case to the people, they consulted Howe, and he recommended Whelan.

It is amazing to find that it was a boy of only 19 who came to Charlottetown in 1843 and on August 31st, commenced publication of *The Palladium*, which had for its motto, "The Liberty of the Press is the Palladium of the Civil, Political, and Religious Rights of a Briton."

This motto is taken from Junius but is brillantly expounded by Curran. I have already referred to Whelan's lecture on *Eloquence As An Art*, as giving the key to the secret shrines at which he worshipped; and in that lecture he quotes from Curran's tribute to the liberty of the press. In that quotation both the word *Palladium* and its significance are eloquently portrayed, as follows:

"What then remains? The liberty of the press *only*—that sacred *Palladium*, which no influence, no power, no minister, no government, which nothing but the depravity or folly or corruption of a jury can ever destroy . . . . . As the advocate of society, therefore—of peace—of domestic liberty—and the lasting union of the two countries—I conjure you to guard the liberty of the press, that great sentinel of the state, that grand detector of public imposture; guard it, because, when it sinks, there sinks with it, in one common grave the liberty of the subject, and security of the Crown."

This motto reveals the fact that the boy editor was already conscious of the power and the responsibility of the press, and that this illumination and emancipation had been arrived at by the study of Irish experiences as well as by his own experience and training in the capable hands of Joseph Howe, who in the famous libel case of 1836 had to defend this liberty as Whelan himself had to do in the libel case of 1862. It was the same background of theoretical and practical experience, together with his adaptable Irish temperament, which enabled him to become immediately, the clear and forcible mouthpiece of the Reforming group in Prince Edward Island. The very first number of the *Palladium* contained a full statement of the public grievances and enunciated a definite policy in regard to them, foreshadowing his future career.

The ardor of youth, his Irish hatred of landlordism, his Nova Scotian experiences, the group that invited him over, all accorded, and combined to set him in ways that were not ways of pleasantness, in paths that were not paths of peace; but enabled him to give a strong lead to the groping forces that were striving towards political and civil liberty and the social and economic improvement of the general citizen.

The advent of the *Palladium* was hailed with much enthusiasm by a few active citizens who had felt the need of some organ to give a disinterested commentary on existing conditions and current affairs. The very second number published September 7, 1843, contains a long letter of appreciation from "a freeholder" in Cavendish, which says in part: "The appearance of the first number of that journal—appropriately called the Palladium—is to me and many of my neighbors a source of much gratulation; it brings new hopes to the oppressed of the colony. From the liberal and independent stand it has taken against all existing abuses of the 'powers that be'; from the deep interest which it seems to evince for the growing prosperity of the country; from its every arrangement to suit public accomodation, I may with safety predict that the 'Palladium' will ere long prove to a discerning and liberal-minded public the sincerity of the assurances which it holds out to them."

Two weeks later 'A Native' from Park Corner writes: "The appearance of the 'Palladium' has afforded much satisfaction to its numerous readers in this neighborhood. Its supporters are without exception pleased with its dispassionate and unexceptionable language in its strictures and censures on the misdeeds and obnoxious measures of our government; but at the same time, they do not hesitate to express their apprehension that your just animadversions will afford our *galled* officials a pretext to punish you for your independence and moral courage—that measures may be taken by the "Family Compact" to suppress your paper, as are now in progress in Nova Scotia to crush the liberal Press of that province. Freeholders who in 1838 withdrew their support from the *Colonial Herald* because it admitted communications in favor of Escheat are now among the patrons of the Palladium and are eager for its more extensive circulation."

The notice attracted by the appearance of the *Palladium* was not confined to Prince Edward Island, and the comment by the Halifax papers was quite as complimentary as that of the correspondents above referred to. *The Nova Scotian* says of it:

The Palladium—"Such is the title of a new semi-weekly newspaper just started at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. We have received the first number and are pleased with its tone of

independence; and hope it may prove a valuable acquisition to the *liberal* Press of these colonies. If there be a place in Her Majesty's dominions where the oppressed need the services of such a paper that place is Prince Edward Island. Mr. Whelan, formerly of this City, is its proprietor and editor; he has our best wishes."

And the *Morning Herald*:

"The *Palladium* is the name of a new paper that has just made its appearance in Prince Edward Island, and is ably conducted by Mr. Whelan. Its typographical appearance is everything that the most fastidious could desire."

Though a small sheet it was very ambitious. Its successive numbers contained vivid editorials, which were adorned with quotations from English masterpieces and passed in review every phase of government, land tenure and social life; and in addition poetry, fiction, humor, news of the Canadas, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the United States, Great Britain and Ireland, with occasional reference to Continental affairs. On the whole it was a remarkable achievement for a youth who had to carry the entire burden under fire from the most vigilant and bitter organs of the entrenched authorities,

During the lifetime of the *Palladium* four other papers were published in Charlottetown:

The Royal Gazette, The Colonial Herald, The Morning News and *The Islander. The Royal Gazette* was supposed to be neutral in politics but its editor as Queen's Printer had to be with the government. The *Colonial Herald* was the organ of the Escheators, but its editor trimmed his sails considerably. *The Morning News* was a Family Compact partisan, and the *Islander* was founded with the avowed purpose of opposing Escheat. The latter so pleased Lt. Gov. Huntley that he diverted some of the work and emolument of the Queen's Printer to its support. The *Palladium*, therefore, was the only paper which made any pretence at being independent. Consequently it immediately, under Whelan, became the mouthpiece of the saner, non-escheating, liberal reformers.

But independent journalism does not pay and those who needed the advocacy of the *Palladium* were unable or unwilling to support it. In the third last number of the *Palladium*—May 3, 1845—Whelan prints the following warning to his subscribers:

"In the course of a week we intend to go on a visit to our subscribers in the interior—perhaps those in the western part of the Island first—and we trust they will hold themselves in readiness to meet the object of our visit. We want money. We want too, to know whether the people who make us very fair promises at

the outset of our career, have common honesty enough to make good those promises at the expiration of twenty months. What were those promises? Simply to pay us for our labor when it would be performed. We have toiled—as no public Journalist ever toiled in this country before us—to advocate the claims, to expose the wrongs of an injured people. Our Press has never been closed to their complaints, our pen has never been palsied by fear or apprehension. We did not pause to calculate what foes to ourselves its undaunted exercise would arouse. Yet, we knew that our enemies would be many. We knew that we would incur "the proud man's contumely," but we spurned it while we felt it to be our duty to expose "oppressor's wrong." We knew we would be proscribed, where proscription could be practised: defamed when it might not be in our power to fling the defamation in the slanderer's teeth, and dare him to its proof.

"We confided in the integrity and good faith (oh! blind confidence !) of the country to support us. We have been deceived—cruelly, basely deceived. Our friends have become apathetic and indifferent; aye, have virtually become our foes.

"Let them beware! The time for a General Election is approaching. The caution and the counsel of the Palladium might do "some service to the State," but whether its voice shall be heard remains with the people to determine.

"Again we say—we shall make an appeal to them in person. Let every man do his utmost and we are with them still."

This very powerful appeal does not appear to have met with the success which it deserved, for before the end of May, *The Palladium* was discontinued, and there was danger that only the voice of the Family Compact would be heard in the land. But relief came from an unexpected quarter.

While temporarily discouraged and meditating withdrawal from the Island, Whelan was appointed in May 1846 editor of the *Morning News*, a semi-weekly newspaper, published by E. A. Moody, and hitherto unfavorable to Reform. But the change of editorship coincided with a change of attitude on the part of Lt.Gov. Huntley towards Responsible Government; so that the new editor was able to continue his old attacks against the Family Compact group without incurring censure for criticizing the representative of the Crown.

In making his second bow to the public he emphasized, among other things, this hopeful opportunity; but at the same time insisted upon the independence of his position and judgment in spite of the past reputation and policy of the *Morning News*. "The Liberal party," he wrote, "have now a fair chance—if they

use it wisely and prudently—of making the Government of Sir Henry V. Huntley, with all its faults, conducive to the best interests of the country. His Excellency is beginning to see the impolicy and mischief of governing exclusively for the benefit of a party, and will no doubt perceive the necessity of entirely casting off the undue influence by which he has been so long controlled, and of adapting his Government to the wants and wishes of the great majority of the people. By pursuing a straightforward, honest and independent line of action, he will secure their respect and gratitude—by pandering to old prejudices and predilections with the hope of conciliating, he will strengthen the hands of his enemies, and cause inevitable and speedy ruin to himself. It will be the object of the *Morning News*—so long, at least, as I may continue to discharge the duties of editorship on its behalf—to note the development of this new and better policy which the Lieutenant-Governor seems inclined to pursue, and to watch, particularly, the movement of the party who are striving to wrest the helm of state from his hands, and who seek to entrap the country into an approval of their proceedings by artifice and misrepresentation."

In August of that same year, Whelan was elected, at the age of 21, representative in the House of Assembly for the second district of King's County. One month later, Mr. Moody died, and he severed his connection with the *Morning News*, at the same time issuing the prospectus of a new paper, *The Examiner*; but, owing to some delay in receiving his plant from Boston, the first number did not appear till August 7, 1847. In the meantime he met the needs of his party by publishing a small paper called *The Reporter*, through which he carried on the battle for reform.

The motto of the *Examiner* was chosen from Euripides: "This is True Liberty when Freeborn Men, having to advise the Public, may speak Free."

During the next four years, both in the House of Assembly and through the pages of the *Examiner*, he contended for Responsible Government, free land, and free speech. In 1851 Responsible Government was conceded; and he became a member of the new Executive Council under the leadership of Hon. George Coles; and, in July 1852, was appointed Queen's Printer; but, though the *Examiner* was temporarily suspended, its old editor frankly declared: "The spirit which animated the *Examiner* shall live and breathe through the columns of the *Royal Gazette*."

During 20 consecutive years Whelan represented St. Peter' District in the Assembly, and when his party was not in power he returned to the columns of the *Examiner*. He was returned in the provincial election of January 1867, but on offering for

re-election as Queen's Printer, in April, he was defeated by a politico-religious combination that grew out of the fact that his advocacy of confederation threw him into line with Wm. H. Pope, who had broken several lances against the Catholic Church. In December he died, at the early age of 45.

Whelan was twice married, first (1845) to Mrs. Mary Weymouth by whom he had two children destined to an early death, secondly (1851) to Miss Mary M. Hughes, daughter of George A. Hughes of H. M. S. *Halifax*. Two daughters born of this union died at an early age, and his only son was drowned at the age of 19. His widow survived him many years and received a small pension from the Government. Their home on the corner of Sidney and Hillsborough streets was destroyed by fire in 1876, and with it his library, manuscripts, and private papers—so that the name and fame of Whelan left no kith or kin to perpetuate them, while he himself was cut off at an age when for most men political activity is only beginning.

Time which was the foe of Whelan does not permit me to linger over incidents in his career, as a word must be said of the unique history of Prince Edward Island in order to estimate his contribution to that history and to a solution of its problems.

In 1767, with minor exceptions, Prince Edward Island had been divided into 20,000 acre lots and granted to a number of government officials or reduced military and naval officers, subject to a quit rent. The proprietors were to settle the Island within a given number of years and to be rewarded by the profits that would accrue. A separate government was conceded in 1769 and in due time Governor Patterson arrived followed in 1775 by Chief Justice Stewart. The Chief Justice had a large and energetic family some of whom served in the American and Napoleonic Wars; but John and Charles interested themselves particularly in the Island, as did also Charles Stewart, Senior, his nephew and William Townshend his son-in-law. Charles Stewart, Junior, married the daughter of Lt.-Gov. Desbrisay and in time a strong Stewart-Desbrisay family influence developed.

The Stewart family quarrelled with Governor Patterson over the acquisition of Town and Pasture lots in Charlottetown and Townships sold for non-payment of quit rents in 1781. Though we cannot go into the details of the quarrel, here, it was of tremendous importance as it unleashed a factious spirit which disturbed and made unlovely the next fifty years of our history. When Patterson was replaced by Fanning and refused to give up the Government, the Stewarts appropriated Fanning and dominated his policy until his recall and the death of the Chief Justice. During the proceedings for adjusting the Quit Rents in 1802 and the early

escheat agitation of 1803, John Stewart was in England and the leading local authority in the lobbies of the Colonial Office. His history, which was written at this time, and in Prince Edward Island is regarded as unbiased and absolutely reliable, is but an *ex parte* statement of the Stewart point of view.

From 1773 onwards there had been an elective assembly in the Island, but during the first 30 years it was composed of men unaccustomed to self-government and parliamentary procedure, unskilled in the ways of diplomacy and in the intricacies of political thought. Consequently it was little more than a rubber-stamp for the views and schemes of the governor or governing faction for the time being. It had suited the interests of the Stewarts and of Governor Fanning to encourage an agitation for the payment of quit rents prior to 1802, and the assembly with John Stewart as Speaker and leader had taken the matter up with energy in 1797; but having succeeded in collecting enough quit rents between 1802 and 1806 to cover the unpaid salaries of the Stewarts and Desbrisays prior to 1777, and having frightened a number of the proprietors into disposing of enough lots to meet the land hunger of these local speculators, the Stewarts and Fanning set their faces against Escheat, on the ground that it would be unfair to the proprietors, who had got settlers, for government to to forfeit and regrant lands to small holders, in fee simple, as no proprietor would henceforth be able to retain any of his tenants. In this argument they were supported by Lord Selkirk, a new proprietor since 1803, John Hill an old enemy in Lots 5 and 6, and the heirs of Chief Baron Montgomery, who had like Capt. John Macdonald done much for the settlement of the Island.

Accordingly their view prevailed. But the agitation which they had set on foot locally, from interested motives, gave alarming signs of getting out of hand, especially, on the arrival of Governor DesBarres and James Bardin Palmer.

Hitherto, the Stewarts with the support of Fanning had been able to suppress all opposition, to ruin the reputation of two attorneys-general, Aplin and Wentworth, and to train Peter Macgowan for that important position. But, when DesBarres witheld his support and called to his aid Palmer and the nascent public opinion, the fat was in the fire and there was a noisy sizzling.

At the end of 1806 and the beginning of 1807 a society of 40 or 50 members was organized in Charlottetown and the Royalty by Haszard, Roubel and Palmer, known as *The Loyal Electors*. It included a number of Loyalists who had not been justly treated and others who were dissatisfied with the packed Assemblies of Fanning or with the general administration of justice and government. The Society frankly avowed its desire to secure

better representatives in the Assembly and planned to form branch societies throughout the Island. To me, this Society is one of the most significant factors in our history. It is the dawning of political consciousness. It is a recognition of the meaning and difficulty of self-government, and of the fact that those who would govern must exert themselves, master details, elaborate principles, and mobilize public opinion. To the older governing faction this Society was an agency of the Prince of Darkness and fit object for the wrath of God. The new Chief Justice Colclough, who had been thoroughly enmeshed in the Stewart web, and Charles Stewart Junior, the new Attorney-General, and the surviving members of the Stewart-Fanning faction, known here as the *Crafty Cabal* all lined up against the Society. One of their number published an alleged minute of the Society to the effect that Palmer had moved for a secret committee. The purpose of this was to show that the Society was a Jacobin Club and that it was planning a local *Revolution*. Investigations and prosecutions followed and the Society was broken up; but its spirit lived on and found expression in the later Escheating group, which developed into the Reforming or Liberal party under Coles and Whelan.

But the whole investigation was a travesty of justice and when DesBarres suspended the Chief Justice, at the request of the Assembly, eight of whose members were Loyal Electors, John Stewart, John Hill, Robert Montgomery and Lord Selkirk succeeded ed in having him recalled and Charles Douglas Smith sent to replace him. Under Smith all public opinion is driven underground until 1824 when it is again mobilized by John Stewart, among others, and he is replaced by John Ready. Under Ready's mild administration the people are encouraged to pursue the paths of quiet self-improvement. There is one little quarrel between the Assembly and the Council in which the former consolidates its power in the control of money bills; but on the whole it is a period of rest before effort, which comes with redoubled energy in the twenty years between 1831 and 1851, when all local machinery receives a careful overhauling and all local grievances are thoroughly aired.

In the first of these decades Escheat is the cry and Wm. Cooper is the leader. Finally the Colonial Secretary informs the Assembly that he will under no circumstances sanction escheat, but he will consider a reasonable tax on land, in lieu of quit rents, for local purposes. In this decade the Glebe and School lands controversy was settled, the lands being sold and the proceeds devoted to education, the former under the direction of the Church of England, the latter under direction of the Assembly. This decade also witnessed the separation of the Legislative and Execu-

tive Councils and the removal of the Chief Justice from both. On the whole it was a period of testing. The Assembly was testing its own powers and also trying all possible roads to freedom.

The decade, 1840-50, saw the birth of the Liberal party as distinct from the Escheating party, and also the definite demand for Responsible Government as the only highroad to the solution of grievances. It also saw an increasing interest in education as an essential to self-government and political power. It was in this decade that Whelan came to the Island and to each of these aspirations he lent his support. I have no wish to disparage the efforts or the contribution of Joseph Pope, Angus Macaulay, William Cooper, Alexander Rae, Thomas Heath Haviland, Edward Palmer or George Coles, in order to exalt Whelan unduly; rather, as this address is about Whelan, to try to estimate his distinctive contribution to each particular movement.

What Prince Edward Island needed, and what Whelan brought was a fresh breeze from the outside world, someone with a broader grasp of principles and with the gift of expressing them forcibly. Both these qualities Whelan possessed in a marked degree and when in co-operation with the shrewd practical common-sense of the comparatively uneducated George Coles, the combination was irresistible.

It had been the avowed aim of Joseph Howe to make Nova Scotia the *Normal School* for Colonial Government and Whelan was an apt pupil. Consequently, when he came to the Island, he understood thoroughly the aim and meaning of responsible government and was able both in the press and on the platform to expound its principles and emphasize its necessity. The local statesmen had been working indirectly towards that end without concentrating on the definite issue, but Whelan immediately directed the discussion into those channels and eagerly seized upon the conversion of Governor Huntley to further his purpose. But he would have no half measures. It was not to be "the mongrel, half-and-half thing that was held up to the admiring gaze of the public in the last House of Assembly, when you and other constituencies were to be deceived, when the political death-warrant of Sir Henry was to be signed—*when the Family Compact power was in danger.*

"If Sir Henry will co-operate with the Liberals, consistent with an impartial discharge of his duties, the Liberals would be worse than fools to disregard his co-operation. On the subject of Responsible Government, I have no hesitation to avow myself an advocate of the system. There can be but little hope for Prince Edward Island until this system be substituted for the present irresponsible one. Whatever party have a majority in the House

of Assembly, that party should have the power and patronage of government in their hands. But under the present system, no matter whether the Liberals have a majority or not, the Tories—the irresponsibles—cling to office and emolument as if office and emolument were their birthright. In England a representative and irresponsible government could never be successfully combined. And every attempt that has been made in the Colonies to form such a combination has given rise to well-grounded discontent and alarm. The Crown cannot nominate its officers without a distinct reference to the wishes of the people. In the Colonies, and particularly in Prince Edward Island, the most important public appointments have been made without ever consulting the will of the people. This is a complete nullification of the representative power; it is, as Lord Durham justly remarks, "A mockery and a source of confusion." As no necessity can be found to exist for a greater modification of our representative institutions in the Colonies than in England, is it not fair and reasonable that the Colonists should insist on obtaining the same power and influence, in a comparative degree, which attach to the representative institutions of the Mother Country. The advocates of the genuine system of Responsible Government—and I shall ever be proud to rank myself among the number—cannot be satisfied with a mere modification of the Executive. The principle of responsibility must be brought to bear upon every department of the administration. The great interests of the country are lodged in the hands of officials. The Representative Body must be allowed to exercise a legitimate control over these officials, otherwise the principle of responsibility is a delusion."

Though this quotation is taken from his first speech in his first election campaign, in 1846, it contains a full and complete exposition of the principle of responsible government. It could be duplicated in a hundred places in his speeches and editorials in the Examiner; for even after the principle was conceded in 1851, it was attacked when the Tories regained power in 1854 and in 1859, but in every case Whelan was foremost in its defence and in providing a theoretical justification of the principle.

It will have been noticed that Whelan uses the term Liberal consistently to describe his party. His second great contribution was in providing a philosophic basis for local Liberalism. His liberalism was essentially the laissez-faire liberalism of the mid-nineteenth century. There should be a career open to talent without regard to birth, race or creed, but the limits of state interference should not be extended beyond the removal of hindrances to the full and complete development of the individual.

Just as "Reformer" was an advance on "Escheater," so

"Liberal" was an improvement on "Reformer." Both names, Reformers and Escheaters, implied a grievance to be removed, an attack to be made against an enemy, but Liberalism pointed essentially to the emancipation of the human spirit and the untrammelling of human activities; and was, as he viewed it, as far removed from faction as Burke's view of conservatism.

Hence it is that, in discussing the introduction of prohibition or The Maine Liquor Law, he does not take refuge behind the fear of smuggling or the inability to enforce the law, but comes out frankly and treats it from the point of view of liberalism and of the revenue. I quote one brief passage merely as an illustration of his liberalism.

"Abolish the traffic in liquor" say the enthusiastic followers of Neal Dow "because its continuance leads to drunkenness." What if it does? Drunkenness carries with it its own punishment, and cannot legally or constitutionally be noticed by the governing power, *unless it interferes with the rights of others.* We have no more authority, and should have no more authority, to punish the drunkard than we have to punish the glutton, unless either or both invade some acknowledged right or privilege of others in the community. Drunkenness *per se* is not a crime, it is a vice, and only a comparatively small portion of mankind are degraded by that vice. Are we then justified in seeking to restrain all mankind, because a small portion of them happen to be the slaves of this vice. If we thus carry our notions of moral reform into the domestic circle, and prescribe what a man shall drink, we may go further, and establish our dictum as to what he shall eat, in order that he may avoid gluttony, or what we may consider unwholesome food; or establish our canon as to the cut and quality of the clothes he may wear, in order that he may avoid the vices of vanity and extravagance."

Whelan's attitude towards education was essentially part of his Liberal outlook. Strictly speaking laissez-faire Liberalism should not lend its support to general taxation for the benefit of particular individuals. A man without children should not be compelled to pay for the education of his neighbour's family; but as ignorance is a hindrance to good citizenship the state should provide education for the general good. However, he recognized the theoretical inconsistency and declared this was one of the instances in which it was "allowable to do a little wrong to effect a great good."

But his faith in education is itself interesting and characteristic of the Victorian Era, when, particularly on the continent of Europe, the ultimate perfectability of man was hoped for through education.

In the first issue of *The Examiner*, August 7, 1847, he writes:

"We cannot devote the power of the Press to an object more momentous than that of fostering and encouraging the desire, now beginning to be generally felt, for the extension of education to the poorest and remotest settlements within our borders. We shall probably devote more space than we can at this time spare, to enquire how far we have been behind our neighbors in the cause of general education. We can however, add that in our own organized system of public instruction, we have lately had satisfactory evidence of judicious and vigorous administration, and able performance of the most difficult and delicate task which is committed to human hands—on Tuesday last we attended the half-yearly examination of the Charlottetown District School, under the tuition of Mr. John LePage, in Kent Street, ...

Again in speaking on the free Education Bill of 1852 he said, *inter alia*:—

"It is an old and true saying, that it is better to pay the baker than the doctor; and if I may be allowed I will add to this a similar adage, and say, 'it is better to pay the parson or the schoolmaster than the lawyer or the hangman.'

"The general diffusion of education will be the general diffusion of all the elements of order, peace and harmony, and happiness. It will increase the capacity for, and the amount of, pure enjoyment in domestic circles. It will afford security to property, and give the best guarantee for the fulfilment of every obligation. It will give a stimulus to industry, and assist ingenuity. It will diminish the temptations to commit crime, and enable individuals to secure the objects of their reasonable or laudable ambition. And while operating thus with respect to individuals and families, it will increase public spirit, aid in the opening up and improvement of our resources, and contribute largely to the general prosperity of the Colony."

Admitting the underlying assumptions of Whelan's position, and looking at this paragraph as an example of impromptu exposition, one must admit one will travel far to find a more concise, compact and at the same time more eloquent passage.

Four years later at the inauguration of the Normal School he exulted in the following strain:

"Though Prince Edward Island happens to be the smallest and the poorest of the North American Colonies, regarding our poverty in a commercial sense, we are entitled to boast that we have taken the lead and set an example to all the others in the important matter of education. The enlightened policy which

placed us in a position thus to boast, though originating with one section of politicans, will be hailed as the brightest inheritance of all who come after us, when the rancour and petty heats of party warfare will be forgotten and the sons and daughters of Prince Edward Island unable to take an interest in the conflicts of their predecessors, may exult on common ground over the boon bequeathed to them. For my own part, though, as I said before, not a native of the Colony, I shall always consider, wherever my lot may be cast, that I have been highly privileged in being not only a member of the community, but a member of the Legislature which gave birth to our fine system of education."

Whelan's Liberalism was of a sturdy type and did not manifest the slightest tinge of servility. He wanted all the people to be educated, he believed in the educative value of political institutions, of the exercise of the franchise, of widespread political discussion; but he never for a moment thought of himself as a mere delegate of the electorate, bound to advocate their views whether he himself considered them right or wrong. In this respect his statement of his position bears a close resemblance to that of Edmund Burke.

You will remember that as a candidate for Bristol, Burke's rival made elaborate promises as to his ready obedience to instructions, in case he was elected. To this Burke replied in part, as follows:

"Certainly gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him their opinions high respect, their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfactions to theirs; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

My worthy colleague says, his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion, in which one set of men deliberate and another decide, and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments?

Authoritative instructions, mandates issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest convictions of his judgment and conscience—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution."

Whether Whelan had studied Burke closely or had arrived independently at a similar conclusion, I cannot say, but there is a remarkable resemblance in the following passage which is only one of at least three statements which he made on the subject:

"These honorable members appear, in this respect, to entertain an idea very different from mine, of the course which it becomes an honest and independent representative of the people to pursue in the Legislature, in reference to an important measure, touching which he and his constituents may not think alike. They seem to think, that, in such a case, it is the duty of the Representative to surrender his judgment to his constituents, and to vote only in obedience to their dictation. I, on the contrary, whilst I admit it to be the duty of a Representative, when so circumstanced, to listen patiently and respectfully to the remonstrances of his constituents and to give their opinions and arguments the fullest consideration, am fully persuaded that he ought not to abandon his own judgment, or deviate from the path which he conscientiously believes it to be his duty to pursue; unless, by the force of facts and reasoning, he shall have been convinced that he had taken an erroneous view of the question."

Whelan's position on the Land Question, which was the *bete noir* of the average Islander for a century, is extraordinarily moderate in view of the local feeling and the history of Ireland. Before his arrival any real hope of escheat had been effectually crushed by the Colonial office. In his earliest addresses Whelan looked to purchase by the government and re-sale to the tenants as the best solution; and, failing that, the acquisition of long-term leases, and some form of compensation for the improvements made by tenants in case of ejection or removal. He had the satisfaction of seeing the Land Purchase Act of 1853, passed by the first government of which he was a member. But there were many hills to climb before the principle of this act was finally accepted for the whole Island, and much bitterness evoked on both sides of the controversy. Having interested himself in the tenants and having been disappointed in an Imperial Loan, and having seen both a bill to tax the rent-rolls of proprietors and a bill to compensate the tenants disallowed in England, he temporarily played with the idea of escheat, not in the hope of securing it, but with a view to forcing his own more moderate solution. It

was these disappointments which caused him to have no faith in the Land Commission of 1861, regarding it merely as a means of drawing a red-herring across the trail. It was these disappointments which caused him to declare in 1861, "We live under a Constitution of Despatches dictated according to the caprice of absentee Land Proprietors." However in the warmest moments of his advocacy he never sanctioned force and warmly repudiated this aspect of the Tenant League's activities. On the whole it may be said that he believed in the ultimate necessity of freehold land tenure in Prince Edward Island as the only means of securing peace, order, industry and progress; and he left no stone unturned to achieve that end.

Curiously enough his disappointment over the Land Question drew from him a very unusual speech which was frequently used against him in his later advocacy of Confederation. In 1864, on the discussion of the appointment of delegates to consider Maritime Union, the refusal of the British Government to implement the report of the recent Land Commission was painfully fresh in his mind and he burst out in very pessimistic strain:

"I care not for the nature of the Union whether it be Federal or Legislative, either will be absurd while we remain tied to the apron strings of our venerable mother—Great Britain. The time will come when as foreshadowed by the statesmen and politicians of Britain, the Colonies will be cut off; and when that time shall arrive, they may, with far more propriety than at present, discuss the principle and details of a Union either Federal or Legislative.

———If the proposed union would give us so much influence as to leave our Legislative action unfettered by the underhand intrigues and influence of the proprietors at the Colonial Office, I would support it————

The Colonial Office acts towards us on the presumption that the Island is under the absolute control of the proprietors, and the idea of Georgetown, Summerside or St. Eleanors being independent of our Legislative Control is not more absurd than the supposition that we will be allowed the reality of representative institutions, while in our isolated condition we are bound by the dicta of a Colonial Minister, in whose appointment we have no voice, and who can treat our remonstrances with disdain.

But with the exception of this unpremeditated outburst, which in itself is a confession of not having considered the question, Whelan's attitude on Confederation was consistent. He was a delegate at the Quebec Conference, a speaker at some of the numerous banquets that were given en route to and from the Conference, and on his return he wrote a short account of the

movement and gave reports of some of the speeches. Speaking at the public banquet to the Delegates in Montreal October 29, 1864, he said: "In the Colonies we have been strangers to each other too long—as much so as if we lived under separate sovereignties. We have been jealous and apprehensive of each other; mutually restricting our trade and placing obstacles in the way of our prosperity, not knowing and not respecting each other as we should. In our separate and disjointed condition, we have not been, and never can be treated with due respect by our powerful foreign neighbors. Even England is concerned for our feeble and defenceless state, and gently chides us for our apparent supineness and indifference. The Confederation, if perfected, will remove that stain, and give all the colonies a national and indivisible character. It will be seen that we are willing to struggle and make sacrifices for our own protection, and then should an evil day and evil counsels bring a conflict upon us, we may rest assured that the red right arm of Britain will be bared to aid us in repelling aggression." In the debates of 1865 he favored union but insisted on submitting the issue to the people. Again, in the "No Terms" debate of 1866, he favored negotiation on the subject and while not satisfied with the Quebec scheme, supported the principle. "My opinion is that if Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada and Newfoundland unite, Prince Edward Island may hold out for a short time, and seek for better terms, but it cannot hold out long." His prophecy was fulfilled but he did not live to see it or to help by his advocacy.

Though Whelan was a severe critic of the Colonial office in regard to its land policy in Prince Edward Island, and a sympathizer with the wrongs of his brothers in Ireland, he was not anti-English and his loyalty to the British Crown cannot be questioned. Like Grattan he wanted constitutional reform not revolution or independence.

Of Whelan's private life I have said little partly because I do not know it in detail, but chiefly because I believe that a man's private life is for his friends while we have a right only to a discussion of his public services. Those who knew him intimately were warmly attached to him and found him an interesting as well as a convivial companion. He was interested in beautifying his native city and the beautiful birch trees which now adorn Hillsborough Square were planted by him. The late J. C. Underhay dug them up, packed them in a flour-barrel and shipped them in a schooner from Annandale to Charlottetown.

Nor shall I quote from the warm eulogies that were published at his death, as they are accessible and can be read at leisure. A representative selection of his speeches, with a short biographical

note, was published in Charlottetown by Mr. Peter McCourt in 1888. For this we are extremely grateful as otherwise only the plodding student who would search the newspaper files of the Province could form any idea of the extent and variety of his labors. Apart from this there is Whelan's own little book on *The Union of the British Provinces*, published in 1865 and now as rare as it is valuable. It is not only a record of the early movement but an illustration of the energy and enthusiasm with which Whelan followed its details.

In sending a copy of it to his friend, J. C. Underhay, he says, "I send you a copy of my little book on Confederation, which you may not deem unworthy of notice. It may be of some use for reference. It is a very humble and unpretending affair; but, even such as it is, it has cost me £150 for printing and binding 2000 copies; and I haven't received a shilling yet for it. However I may get some thing by and bye." Whelan was always poor, and while this is a tribute to his public honesty, it is rather pathetic to find that he did not get even a moderate indemnity for his public labors.

Such is the lot of historians and philosophers.

But as Whelan had the instincts of a scholar and much of the scholar's equipment it would be the fittest vindication of his memory at this late date, if some fund could be accumulated, the proceeds of which could be devoted to a scholarship at the two local colleges—Prince of Wales and St. Dunstan's—a scholarship which should bear his name and lead out into the wider world, which he had explored in imagination, the most promising sons and daughters of the Islanders whose lot he strove so hard to improve to the neglect of his own fortunes. In this way his adopted sons and daughters would do for his name what he did for his adopted home.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have tried in an hour, on a hot night, to tell my own generation and to remind an older one of some of the things for which Edward Whelan stood, and of the debt of gratitude which we all owe to him. Some day I hope to do the same for other men who have served our Island in the past, believing as I do, that "the strength of a people is in its history," and that we can develop wisely only by building upon past foundations and discarding the rubble that has accumulated in building. If my statement is even approximately correct, Whelan was an exceptionally capable man, an honorable, straightforward citizen, an able journalist, a gifted orator, tolerant in religion, faithful in friendship, putting principle into party but country before private interest. If at times he hit hard blows, it was because he worked in an atmosphere that had been contamina-

ted by faction and with men who did not hesitate to villify an opponent in order to gain a point. It was a small community in which our big problems were fought out; and that intensified the struggle, increased the bitterness, while a too intimate knowledge of one another's weaknesses led to mutual recrimination, but, though he found his opponents styled, *The Crafty Cabal, The Sticklers, The Black Watch,* and *The Family Compact,* and at times used these names for identification in attack, he himself regarded them as Tories by principle and treated them as foemen worthy of his steel. So too, while he found his own party tainted with the passions engendered by the Escheat Agitation, only vaguely striving after reform, but definitely sneered at as *Snatchers,* he breathed into it true liberal principles and persisted in dignifying it with the honorable name of Liberal.

In spite of the directness and bitterness of the struggle, there is hardly a speech of his that does not lift the local question unto the higher planes of political philosophy. If he is discussing responsible government in Prince Edward Island, he brings to bear upon this discussion what has been done or left undone in the Canadas, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. If he is discussing education the same thing applies, and in addition comparisons are instituted with the United States and Great Britain. In supporting a patriotic contribution in the Crimean War, he feels it necessary to inform his fellow-countrymen of the issues involved in that War, and he treats them to one of the ablest and most picturesque accounts of that struggle that could be given.

All this goes to show that Whelan was a man of wide reading, deep insight, and of great humanity. There are times when impatience with the restricted area of the local field peeps out in his addresses and a note of querulousness at the personal attacks upon himself, but in the main, he accommodates himself easily to local circumstances, retains his independence jauntily, his consistency in action and resignation in defeat. It was impossible that he should not feel keenly the estrangement from old political friends on the Confederation issue, but he stuck to his guns, and later events vindicated his position. His early death robbed us of much ripening wisdom and perhaps denied to Canada his services at the same time as it limited his activities to our province. But if his public work was confined to Prince Edward Island, that Island has benefited greatly by his knowledge of a wider sphere, and if his resting place by St. Peter's Road is far from the haunts of those who delight in pilgrimages, let us find satisfaction in the saying of Thucydides, that, "The whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men."

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